GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3369
ANSWERED ON:04.08.2017
Obese Children
Ahlawat Smt. Santosh;Khuba Shri Bhagwanth;Saraswati Shri Sumedhanand

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether consumption of junk food has affected the health of children in the country and if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether India has the second highest number of obese children in the world after China, if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether excess body weight attributed four million deaths in the year 2015, if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Government proposes a measure to save the health of children by promoting nutritional food, if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the response of the Government in this regard?

Answer

ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND
FAMILY WELFARE
(SMT. ANUPRIYA PATEL)
(a): 'Junk Food' has not been defined under the Food Safety and Standards (FSS) Act, 2006 and Regulations thereunder.

However, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has informed that excess consumption of calorie dense foods containing high levels of saturated fats, trans-fatty acids, free sugars and/or salt either alone, or in combination with insufficient physical activity, contribute to obesity and diabetes, as well as other Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). National dietary surveys indicate that foods and beverages high in free sugars can be a major source of discretionary calories in the diet, particularly in the case of children, adolescents and young adults.

(b) & (c): As per a report in the New England journal of medicine (NEJM), China and India had the highest numbers of obese children In 2015. It was also published that in 2015, high BMI contributed to 4.0 million deaths (95% uncertainty interval, 2.7 to 5.3), which represented 7.1% (95% uncertainty interval, 4.9 to 9.6) of the deaths from any cause.

(d) & (e): The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has requested all States/UT's and the Ministry of Human Resource Development to consider issuing appropriate directions to schools and colleges for withdrawing foods high in saturated fat and carbonated drinks from canteens and promoting healthy food habits. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India issued guidelines for making available wholesome, nutritious, safe and hygienic food to school children in India on 12.10.2015 whereby the availability of most common HFSS (High in Fat, Salt and Sugar) Foods in schools has been restricted/limited. Further, to address holistically the issue of High Fat, Sugar and Salt (HFSS) in food and associated health risks, FSSAI constituted an Expert Group that included eminent experts from the fields of medicine, nutrition, and dietetics representing well known medical research and academic institutions. The aforesaid guidelines and report of the expert group have also been uploaded on the website of FSSAI.

The Government of India has also launched Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) for adolescents in the age group of 10-19 years, which would target their nutrition including Body Mass Index (BMI) Screening, reproductive health, and substance abuse, among other issues.